



“Paint” Logo (from Windows 7)

“Paint”

A programme for managing image files

There are many programmes that help people to do things with image files. The most easily-available one is “[Paint](#)”, which comes as part of the Microsoft Windows operating system package. So, “Paint” is a good example to use, because most people will already have it, on their computers.

From “Start”, click “All Programmes”, “Accessories”, and “Paint”.

What is an image, or graphics, file? It is an electronic file that stores an image. Using such files, it becomes possible to insert images into your text documents and into your e-mails, in just the same way as the “Paint” logo has been used in this document (see above).

The ability to use images as well as text makes you into a much better communicator. It also opens the door to graphic design.

Photographs are also stored in image files, so this item applies to photos as well as to graphics such as logos.

File formats

Graphic images are stored by computer programs into files with extensions like .BMP (“Bitmap”), .JPG (“J-peg”), .PNG, .GIF, and .TIF (“Tiff”). Paint will open all these formats, and it can also save a file in a different format to what it was originally. This is a useful thing to be able to do.

The reason is that different file formats have different characteristics. The first consideration is file size. Bitmap files are usually very large. Hence they are usually converted to one of the other formats before use, such as JPEG.

The J-peg, or JPEG, is the most economical format. The file sizes are very small, such that one may be able to insert several J-pegs in one document, without the document becoming too large.

But the quality of the JPEG image is not always good. A good compromise is PNG, which saves colours very well, but is not too large, although usually larger than a JPEG.

Saving an image file is the same as saving any other kind of file. It must have a name, and it goes in a “folder”, where it can be found again when it is needed.

Cropping and re-sizing

In “Paint”, you can crop an image, and you can re-size it. The largest size you are likely to need for e-mails is 850 pixels across. Cropping and re-sizing can produce a smaller file, which may be a better image, as well. In Paint, to crop all four sides of an image, you will have to “Rotate” it.

Inserting an image into an e-mail

To be able to insert an image into a document or an e-mail, and to be able to control its position there, is a giant step forward in your computing life. In “Word” and in “Outlook” you use the “Insert” tab and then the “Picture” icon. In Thunderbird you use the “Insert” drop-down menu or icon, and select “Image”. In Gmail you click the little image icon at the bottom of your e-mail box, then follow the given procedure to find the file you want to insert, from your hard drive. Click “Upload” and then “Choose photo”.

Your image will go in where you left your cursor. If you want to centre the image, select it and then click on the centre (text) icon. You will also be able to adjust the size of your image.

Getting and creating more images

One way to get images is to use the “PrtSc” (“Print Screen”) key on the keyboard. This causes the contents of the open screen to be held in the “Clipboard”, from where it can be pasted into the screen of “Paint”, and then saved as an image file.

This provides a way of reducing a poster, say, to an image equivalent to an electronic flier that you could paste into an e-mail. The CU relies on this technique, a lot.

Among other things, use of “PrtSc” gives you a way to put together a new composite image from separate existing images. You can use “Table” in Word, and open images in different cells. This allows you to control the whole “ensemble”. You can remove the cell borders. Then you can do a “PrtSC”, and paste the composite image in to “Paint”, and save.

Big sources of images are Google Images and Yahoo Images. Don’t use other people’s images if they don’t want you to.

More tools in “Paint”

In “Paint” you can draw freehand, or use the given shapes and lines. You can fill with colour. If you want to extend or reproduce a colour, you can use the “Colour Picker” tool, and then the “Fill” thing.

You can open “Paint” more than once, i.e. you can have different images open and you can select, copy and paste from one window to another.

That’s about it. Paint does not have a lot of tools, but you can do nearly everything you would normally want to do, with this useful little programme that everybody has.

- To download any of the CU courses in PDF files [please click here](#).